

AMERICAN EMBASSY'S NATIONAL DAILY PRESS REVIEW

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Today's Top Stories

- 1. Reactions to a planned crackdown on rogue FRCI elements**
- 2. ECOWAS agreement on international arrest warrants**
- 3. Domestic affairs**

1. Reactions to a planned crackdown on rogue FRCI elements

The decision by Ivorian authorities to crack down on rogue elements from the army has triggered comments and speculation, especially in papers close to the opposition which remain skeptical about the outcome of this drive. Thus, an article in *Le Nouveau Courrier* (p. 3) qualified the drive as a "flashy statement" with no expectation of results on the ground. The daily argued that the task awaiting the leadership of the Ivorian army is huge as most FRCI elements ignore military discipline and tend to operate as militiamen rather than professional soldiers. The daily also noted that tracking down individuals once considered as "the saviors" of the ruling regime is easier to say than to actually do.

Notre Voie (p. 2) carried a similar account, adding that President Ouattara's move is in response to international critics against the army and a recent report by the International Crisis Group denouncing crimes and other corrupt practices some FRCI elements have reportedly been engaged in.

Still on the issue, *Soir Info* (p. 5) noted that the 48 hour ultimatum President Ouattara has given to send army personnel back to their barracks is likely to bring about tension within the FRCI. According to the daily, this underscored the importance of addressing the challenge of disarmament and demobilization of former combatants. However, as the security situation remains unpredictable, the paper questioned the chance for the operation to be successful.

With more on security issues, *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* (p. 4) noted that an operation dubbed "Phenix" jointly designed by Ivorian army officials and UN forces will be implemented nationwide. The drive, the paper said, is aimed at monitoring security during the New Year holiday and instilling social confidence.

2. ECOWAS agreement on international arrest warrants

According to the Ivorian Foreign Affairs Minister, members states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have committed to complying with the arrest warrants the Ivorian government has issued against individuals accused of crimes and other abuses during the post-electoral crisis. Providing details, *Fraternite Matin* (p. 6) reports that Mr. Daniel Kablan Duncan, speaking yesterday in the course of a press conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said measures are being taken to clarify these arrests warrants for their timely implementation. He also reportedly used the occasion to shed light on President Alassane Ouattara's recent missions in the African sub-region and in Europe. According to Mr. Kablan Duncan, these missions were primarily aimed at fostering bilateral cooperation and relationship.

Still on the issue, *Le Nouveau Courrier* (p. 3) noted that Mr. Duncan said that in a bid to regain its prestige and to comply with international standards, the government has decided to streamline its activities in some embassies and chancelleries.

3. Domestic Affairs

On economic issues, *Nord Sud Quotidien* (p. 10) noted that the West African Development Bank (BOAD) has granted a FCFA 17 billion (US \$34 million) loan to Cote d'Ivoire to finance the rehabilitation of infrastructure and rural development projects. Providing details, the paper noted that the loan is part of the bank's multi-level support for the reconstruction of the country's economy.

An article in *Soir Info* (p. 3) noted that an Abidjan court is to decide today on the case of some of former president Laurent Gbagbo's supporters under custody in the northern part of the country. Temporary release could be granted to these individuals, the paper said.

Finally, Prime Minister Guillaume Soro has returned to Cote d'Ivoire after a trip to the United States last week. According to *Fraternite Matin* (p. 4), the Ivorian premier had a meeting yesterday with President Ouattara. This meeting, the paper said, was ahead of a cabinet meeting scheduled for today.

Media affiliation and circulation

Fraternite Matin	State-owned daily newspaper	23,945
L'Intelligent d'Abidjan	Privately-owned daily, leans pro-President Alassane Ouattara	7,000
L'Inter	Independent daily	20,000
Nord-Sud Quotidien	Daily close to Prime Minister Guillaume Soro	10,000
Notre Voie	Daily close to the FPI, the party of Former President Laurent Gbagbo	16,960
Le Nouveau Courrier	Daily close to the FPI, the party of Former President Laurent Gbagbo	10,000
Le Nouveau Reveil	Daily close to the PDCI-RDA, the party of Former President Henri Konan Bedie	17,190
Le Patriote	Daily close to the RDR, the party of President Alassane Ouattara	17,000
RTI TV	State broadcaster	
Soir Info	Independent daily	22,000

NOTE: Newspaper circulation figures represent the number of copies printed, not actual sales